IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (currently amended) A battery comprising:

a battery case defining an interior volume; and

an electrode assembly mounted in the ~~said~~ interior volume, the ~~said~~ electrode assembly includes a plurality of metal reinforcing strips and ~~comprising:~~ a plurality of planar elements, the plurality of planar elements includes ~~including~~ a plurality of positive electrodes, a plurality of negative electrodes, and a plurality of separators;

each of the ~~said~~ positive electrodes includes ~~comprising~~

a metal substrate having a peripheral edge defining an active area and a tab extending from the ~~said~~ active area, ~~said active area defining front and rear faces each bearing~~

a layer of positive active material on the active area of the positive electrodes;

~~each of said positive electrode tabs defining front and rear faces each having a metal reinforcing strip attached thereto;~~

each of the ~~said~~ negative electrodes includes ~~comprising~~

a metal substrate having a peripheral edge defining an active area and a tab extending from the ~~said~~ active area, ~~said active area defining front and rear faces each bearing~~

a layer of negative active material on the active area of the negative electrodes; ~~each of said negative electrode tabs defining front and rear faces having a metal reinforcing strip attached thereto; each of said separators having a peripheral edge defining a primary area and a tab extending from said primary area;~~

the tab of each positive electrode and the tab of each negative electrode having a face attached to one of the reinforcing strips such that each reinforcing strip is attached to a single one of the tabs; ~~and wherein~~

the ~~said~~ plurality of planar elements are arranged in a stack ~~comprising a sequence~~ of alternating positive and negative electrodes with ~~having~~ a separator ~~interposed~~ between adjacent electrodes; and ~~wherein said~~

the positive electrode tabs are aligned to form a positive tab column and the ~~said~~ negative electrode tabs are aligned to form a negative tab column that is spaced apart from the ~~said~~ positive tab column.

2. (currently amended) The battery of claim 1, including a plurality of clips that each includes ~~comprising~~ an integral metal piece having first and second portions bent around a foldline; and wherein

each of the ~~said~~ clips is mounted on an electrode tab with the ~~said~~ clip first ~~and second portions respectively~~ engaging portion attached to a front face of the tab and the second portion attached to a rear face of the tab such that the first portion and the second portion each serve as one of the metal reinforcing strips ~~said tab front and rear faces to form the said metal reinforcing strips~~.

3. (currently amended) The battery of claim 2, wherein each clip on the ~~said~~ positive electrode tabs is sufficiently thick to abut a clip on an adjacent tab along the ~~said~~ positive tab column; and wherein

each clip on the ~~said~~ negative electrode tabs is sufficiently thick to abut a clip on an adjacent tab along the ~~said~~ negative tab column.

4. (currently amended) The battery of claim 2, wherein each ~~of said clips~~ clip has a first alignment hole and a second alignment hole ~~spaced first and second alignment holes~~ extending through the first portion of the clip, the second portion of the clip, and the tab between the first portion of the clip and the second portion of the clip, the first alignment hole being spaced apart from the second alignment hole ~~and second portions thereof and the electrode tab therebetween~~.

5. (currently amended) The battery of claim ~~3~~ 4, wherein each of the ~~said~~ clips is trimmed to define a reference edge; and wherein

the first alignment hole and the second alignment hole in each clip is ~~of said clips has spaced first and second alignment holes~~ referenced to the ~~said~~ reference edge ~~extending through the said first and second clip portions and the tab therebetween~~.

6. (currently amended) The battery of claim 4, wherein the ~~said~~ alignment holes are circular.

7. (currently amended) The battery of claim 4, wherein the ~~said~~ alignment holes are noncircular.

8. (currently amended) The battery of claim 4, further ~~including~~ comprising:

registration pins extending through the first alignment holes and the second ~~said~~ alignment holes.

9. (currently amended) The battery of claim ~~1~~ 4, wherein ~~including a plurality of clips each comprising an integral metal piece having first and second portions bent to define an interior foldline and an exterior foldline; and wherein~~ the foldline of each clip includes an interior foldline and an exterior foldline, ~~each of said clips is mounted on an electrode tab with said clip first and second portions respectively engaging said tab front and rear faces to form said metal reinforcing strips and with clip~~ and the interior foldline is positioned adjacent to an ~~a tab~~ outer edge of the tab to which the clip is attached.

10. (currently amended) The battery of claim 9, wherein each clip on the ~~said~~ positive electrode tabs is sufficiently thick to abut a clip on an adjacent tab along the ~~said~~ positive tab column; and wherein

each clip on the ~~said~~ negative electrode tabs is sufficiently thick to abut a clip on an adjacent tab along the ~~said~~ negative tab column.

11. (currently amended) The battery of claim 10, wherein a first weld bonds together the ~~all of said~~ clips attached to the ~~on said~~ positive electrode tabs ~~are welded together~~; and wherein

a second weld bonds together the ~~all of said~~ clips attached to the ~~on said~~ negative electrode ~~tabs are welded together~~.

12. (currently amended) The battery of claim 10, wherein each ~~of said clips defines~~ clip includes an opening extending from the ~~said~~ interior foldline to the ~~said~~ exterior foldline such that ~~to expose~~ a portion of the tab to which the clip is attached is exposed through the opening ~~a tab therethrough~~; and wherein

the first weld bonds together ~~said clips on said positive electrode tabs and~~ the ~~tab~~ portions of the positive electrode tabs that are exposed ~~therethrough~~ through the openings ~~are welded together~~; and

the second weld bonds together ~~said clips on said negative electrode tabs and~~ the ~~tab~~ portions of the negative electrode tabs that are exposed through the openings ~~tab portions exposed therethrough are all welded together~~.

13. (currently amended) The battery of claim 1, wherein each separator in the ~~said~~ stack has a tab bridging the spacing between the tab on a ~~an adjacent~~ positive electrode adjacent to the separator and the tab on a ~~an adjacent~~ negative electrode adjacent to the separator.

14. (currently amended) The battery of claim 1, wherein first alignment holes and second alignment holes extend through each of the ~~said~~ positive electrode tabs and through each of the reinforcing strips attached to the positive electrode tabs ~~thereto have first and second spaced alignment holes extending therethrough~~; ~~and wherein~~

the first ~~said positive electrode tab~~ alignment holes are ~~precisely~~ aligned in ~~said stack to form~~ the ~~said~~ positive tab column; ~~and wherein~~

the second alignment holes are aligned in the positive tab column;

third alignment holes and fourth alignment holes extend through each of the ~~said~~ negative electrode tabs and through each of the reinforcing strips attached ~~thereto have third and fourth spaced alignment holes extending therethrough~~ to the negative electrode tabs; ~~and wherein~~

the third ~~said negative electrode tab~~ alignment holes are ~~precisely~~ aligned in the ~~said stack to form said~~ negative tab column; and

the fourth alignment holes are aligned in the negative tab column.

15. (currently amended) The battery of claim 14, further ~~including~~ comprising:

registration pins extending through the ~~said~~ first alignment holes, the second alignment holes, the third alignment holes, and the fourth alignment holes.

16. (currently amended) The battery of claim 14, wherein

fifth alignment holes and sixth alignment holes extend through a tab included in each separator ~~in the said stack has a tab having fifth and sixth alignment holes extending therethrough; and wherein~~

each separator tab bridges the spacing between tabs on a positive electrode adjacent to the separator and a ~~adjacent positive and~~ negative electrode adjacent to the separator ~~electrodes~~; and ~~wherein~~

the ~~said tab~~ fifth ~~and sixth~~ alignment holes are ~~respectively~~ aligned with the ~~said positive tab~~ second alignment holes ~~hole and said negative tab third alignment hole~~; and

the sixth alignment holes are aligned with the third alignment holes.

17. (currently amended) The battery of claim 16, wherein each separator tab is compressed between ~~adjacent~~ reinforcing strips ~~on tabs~~ in the ~~said~~ positive tab column and between ~~adjacent~~ reinforcing strips ~~on tabs~~ in the ~~said~~ negative tab column.

18. (currently amended) The battery of claim 1, wherein each of the ~~said~~ metal substrates has a thickness within a range of 5 to 30 microns and each of the ~~said~~ active material layers has a thickness within a range of 30 to 120 microns.

19. (currently amended) The battery of claim 18, wherein each of the ~~said~~ separators has a thickness within a range of 20 to 30 microns.

20. (currently amended) The battery of claim 19, wherein the reinforcing strips on each positive electrode tab are sufficiently thick to abut reinforcing strips on an adjacent positive electrode tab in the ~~said~~ stack; and wherein

the reinforcing strips on each negative electrode tab are sufficiently thick to abut reinforcing strips on an adjacent negative electrode tab in the ~~said~~ stack.

21. (currently amended) A battery, comprising ~~including~~:

an electrode assembly that includes ~~comprising~~ a stack of planar elements, the planar elements include ~~including~~ a plurality of alternately arranged positive electrodes and negative electrodes and ~~wherein said stack includes~~ means for separating adjacent electrodes;

each of the ~~said~~ electrodes including a substrate defining an active area and a tab extending therefrom;

each ~~of said tabs~~ tab having a first reinforcing strip attached ~~secured~~ to a front face of the tab ~~thereof~~ and a second reinforcing strip attached ~~secured~~ to a rear face ~~thereof~~ of the tab such that each first reinforcement strip is attached to a single one of the tabs and each second reinforcement strip is attached to a single one of the tabs;

the ~~said~~ tabs of the ~~said~~ positive electrodes in the ~~said~~ stack being aligned to form a positive tab column;

the ~~said~~ tabs of the ~~said~~ negative electrodes in the ~~said~~ stack being aligned to form a negative tab column extending parallel to and displaced from the ~~said~~ positive tab column; and wherein

a first weld bonds together the ~~said~~ positive electrode tab reinforcing strips; ~~are all welded together~~ and

a second weld bonds together the ~~said~~ negative electrode tab reinforcing strips ~~are all welded together~~.

22. (currently amended) A method of fabricating an electrode assembly, comprising:

forming a plurality of positive electrodes each including

a substrate defining a substrate active area and a tab extending from the ~~said~~ active area, and

a ~~wherein said substrate active area has~~ positive active material on the active area of the positive electrodes ~~front and rear faces thereof~~;

forming a plurality of negative electrodes each including

a substrate defining a substrate active area and a tab extending from the ~~said~~ active area, and

a ~~wherein the said substrate active area has~~ negative active material on ~~front and rear faces thereof~~ the active area of the negative electrodes;

attaching ~~securing~~ a first reinforcing strip to a ~~end second reinforcing strips to the~~ front ~~and rear faces~~ face of each of the ~~said~~ tabs such that each first reinforcing strip is attached to a single one of the tabs;

attaching ~~securing~~ a second reinforcing strip to a rear face of each of the tabs such that each second reinforcing strip is attached to a single one of the tabs;

forming first and second alignment holes through each of ~~said tabs and~~ the ~~said~~ reinforcing strips ~~secured thereto~~;

alternately stacking the ~~said~~ positive and negative electrodes together with separators interposed between adjacent electrodes to align positive electrode tabs along a first column and negative electrode tabs along a second column;

welding together the ~~said~~ reinforcing strips attached ~~secured~~ to the ~~said~~ positive electrode tabs; and

welding together the ~~said~~ reinforcing strips attached ~~secured~~ to the ~~said~~ negative electrode tabs.